

Rev. Derek Fairman

## Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

This day we celebrate the beginning of our salvation: the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Blessed Virgin Mary, from the very first moment of her existence, was without sin. This day we celebrate the preparation that she received in order to become the Mother of God. This solemnity is a day in which the human race can celebrate its first victory over original sin, an enemy that had enslaved the human race for so long.

This event was foretold from the very beginning. In the Book of Genesis, we are told that it was not good for the man, Adam, to be alone, and so God created Eve. We don't really think too much about Adam's time without Eve. Normally, we think about Adam and Eve together. Adam certainly would not have gotten far without Eve. There is much that we do not know, but we do know that the woman, Eve, was not left out of God's design for His creation, but was an integral part of that design.

The reading from the Book of Genesis recalls Eve's participation in original sin. It recalls that the serpent tricked Eve into eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, a tree whose fruit Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat from. Eve failed to avoid the temptation to disobey God that the serpent provided. Besides incurring the punishment that Adam had received, Eve would have to deal with a consequence uniquely her own: she would have to bring forth her children in pain. Had Eve not sinned, she would have borne Adam's children without any pain.

Perhaps Eve's greatest pains came not from the pain of bearing children, but of seeing one of her sons, Cain, murder the other, Abel. Adam and Eve had to deal with the consequences of their disobedience. For their children, they would only know a world apart from the garden. They would only know a world in which original sin was present. They would only know a world in which the serpent had won. Adam and Eve had to live with the knowledge that they could have lived in the garden, had they not chosen to disobey God. They had known a world without sin, and longed to return there.

Eve failed to return to the Garden of Eden, but Eve did not lose all hope. Eve would find some redemption through her offspring. The Lord tells Eve that her offspring will strike at the head of the serpent. In addition, Eve is called the mother of all of the living. When we think about it, our human nature goes all the way back to Eve. We can trace our roots back to her.

